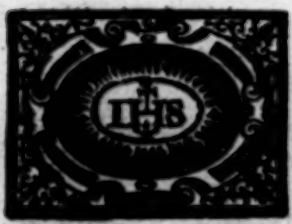
A TREATISE OF MODESTY AND SILENCE.

Composed by the Reuerend Father, F. ALFONSO RODRIGVEZ of the Society of IESVS.

Translated into English.



Permissu Superiorum. 1632.

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A TREATISE OF MODESTY AND SILENCE.

How necessary Modesty is to the edification, and profit of our Neighbour.

CHAP. I.

MODESTY, which now we are to treat of, doth consist herein, that our outward composition be such, such the custody of our senses, such lastly our words and conuersation, & our whole carriage and iesture of our body, that it may edify all those who see and conuerse with vs. S. *Augustine* in this sen-

tence of his, comprehendes all which may be sayd of it: *In omnibus motibus vestris nihil fiat, quod cuiusquam offendat aspectum, sed quod vestram deceat sanctitatē.* *In all your actions and motions* (sayth he) *let there appeare nothing, which may offend the eyes of any one, but let all be such as may become your sanctity*. It is not my intention, to descend to the declaration of those particular thinges, in which Modesty doth consist; neither to define what immodesty is: but for the present this rule of *S. Augustine* shall suffice in generall, which is ordinarily receaued and followed by the holy Fathers and Masters of spirituall life. Let there appeare in your exteriour, humility accompanyed with grauity & religious maturity, and you will not fayle of that modesty which is required. My intent is ōly to declare how necessary this modesty is, especially for those, who are according to their Institute, not only to attend vnto their owne saluation and perfection, but also to the saluation & perfection of their Neighbour. And first, one of the thinges, by which our Neighbour is particularly edifyed, and

August. in reg.

gayned

gained to God Almighty, is a Religious and well composed exteriour, that takes their eyes (the interiour they can not see) that moues and edifies them, in briefe that instructs and preaches to them more efficatiously oftentimes, thē any thing we can present cloathed in wordes vnto them. And so we read of Holy *S. Francis*, that once he sayd vnto his companion: Come let vs go forth and preach; and so they went into the Citty together, & after a long circuit about the streetes, came without any more a do vnto their Couent backe againe: his companion thinking he had forgot himselfe, told him; Father you sayd you would go out to preach; vnto whome he answered that he had preached already: for sayd he, that Modesty and Religious grauity with which we haue walked along the streets, was an excellent sermon, and hath greatest efficacy to stir the people vp to deuotiō, to the contempt of the world, to contrition for their sinnes, and to lift vp their hartes and their desires, vnto heauen and heauenly things. And this sermon of works is far more efficacious,

then those of words.

Secondly, this modesty and exteriour composition, helps very much, vnto our owne spirituall profit, as we shall proue more amply hereafter, seeing that the vnion and sympathy of the soule and body and of the interiour & exteriour man is so straight & so reciprocall that what soeuer is in the one, is presently cõmunicated to the other: so that whensoeuer the soule is well composed, the body naturaly conforms it selfe vnto it; and one the contrary, when the body is disordered, the soule is presently, discomposed, vnquiet and troubled. And hence it is that Modesty and exteriour composition, is an infallible argument, of an interiour recollection, of profit in spirit, and of solid vertue, iust as the hand of a dyall, doth declare without, the motion & measure which the wheels keep within.

And by this second that first is better comprehended and declared: for the cause why men most commonly are so much edifyed with modesty and that exteriour composition, is because they perceaue and gather from thence, the

interiour

interiour vertue of the soule, and therfore they make so great esteeme of it *Saint Hierome* sayes: *Speculum mentis est facies, & taciti oculi mentis fatentur arcana. The face is the Mirrour of the mynd, and silent eyes, declare the secrets of the hart.* And it is the saying of the Holy Ghost: *As in water the countenance of them, that looke therein shineth; so the hartes of men are manifest to the wise and prudent.* There is no glasse which represents so liuely any person, as the exteriour doth the quality of the interiour, *man is knowne* (saith the wise man) *by sight, and the sensible and wise by the occurance of his face, the habit of the body, the laughter of his teeth, and the gate of the man do declare* (*inough*) *of him.* And discipherīng of an Apostata, he sayth: *He who is an Apostata, is a friuelous man, he walkes with a distorted mouth, he winkes* (And makes signes) *with his eyes, he weaues with his feet, and speakes with his fingers,* And this was *S. Gregory Nazianzens* obseruation of *Iulian* the *Apostata*, the cōdition (sayshe) and manners of *Iulian* were vnknowne to many, vntill they came to appeare in his Actions, and that Impe-

Hier. epist ad Fur. in fine.

Prou. 27. cap. 19.

Eccl. 19. 28.

Prou. 6. 12

Greg. Naz in init. Eccles. p. 2. l. 4. in fine.

rial authority, to which he was elected; but for my part I knew his nature euer since I saw and spoke with him at Athens. I neuer obserued the least presage or signe of any good in him, he had a proud stiffe necke; his shoulders vnstable and continually in a dauncing motion, his eyes full of leuity, and glauncing about one euery side of him, a sterne countenance, his feet with a kind of itching restlesnes; a gibing scornfull nose, and a tongue giuen vnto licētious iests & scurillity, a wide loud laughter, and an inconstant facility to graunt and deny a thing at the same instant; he was intemperat in words, his reasons silly and without all ground; in questioning he was importun, & in answering senseles, & nothing to the purpose. But why, sayth he, do I giue the Character of him so at large? I wil conclude with this, that I knew him long time before I saw his works, and since by his workes haue knowne him much better then before. And if they were now present, who were then in company with me, they would witnesse for me, that then obseruing thus much in him,

him, I sayd: Oh what a venimous serpent, the Common wealth of Rome doth nourish to ruine it! and whilst I sayd this I should haue bene most glad, that his future carriage would haue giuen the lye to this presage of myne: & it had ben much better that I had failed in an vntruth, then all the world fallen into so great calamity, as perhaps it neuer was afflicted with before. And so iust as the incompositednes of the exteriour, is an euident signe of the defectes which are in the interiour; so on the contrary the modesty, and exteriour composition sufficiently declare the interiour vertue of the soule, and therfore it moues and edifies so much.

For this reason we are particularly obliged to bestow all diligence in the obteyning of it, for as the end of our Institut is to profit, and help our neighbour, with our ministeries of preaching hearing confessions, teaching, catechising, conuersing with others, visiting prisons, Hospitals, and the like, one of the things of greatest force & efficacy for to gayne credit vnto our functions, and make a rich harueſt in our neighbours

bours soules, is this modesty and exteriour composition of ours. For this is it which gayns vs authority with our Neighbours, who through the bright cristall of a well composed exteriour behold the fayre reliques of interiour vertue, and obserue enery word proceeding from themselues as so many oracles coming downe from heauen & for such they conserue them in their hartes and memoryes. *Surius* recounts how that Pope *Innocent* the second coming once to the Monestary of Clareual, accomponyed with the Cardinals, all the Religious went out for to reyceaue him, together which S. *Bernard* who then was resident there, and the History says that the sight of so many holy Religious mē, did so liuely touch them who were lookers on, as the Pope and all the Cardinals out of deuotion did weep, only to see the Modesty of those Religious, and all were much astonished to behold the gratity of that holy congregation, who in so great and vnusuall celebrety & ioy, (as was that, to haue their Monastery visited by the Pope and Cardinals,) did hold

Surius l. 2. cap. 2. de vita S. Bernardi.

hold their eyes continually fixed on the ground, without once so much as casting a looke aside; and whilest euery one besides were wistly regarding them, they only neuer listed vp an eye to looke on any.

Neither doth this Modesty and Religious composition confer only much helpe to the edification of those abroad, but also to those of the same house with vs, for like as secular people are much moued and edifyed to se a Religious mā, whilst he serues masse, neuer looke vp with his eyes nor cast his head aside, & when he walkes in the streets, not so much as to lift vp his eyes to see that which is in his way, they are much confounded and moued vnto compunction, and in their soules haue it in high esteeme: so likewise among our selues, on doth edify much, and excits all vnto deuotion and compunction, who goes about his businese with Modesty, silence, and religious grauity. And so *S. Hierome* among other fruites which he reckons vp, of this Modesty and exteriour composition, says that; *Loquacibus compunctionem ingerant, & in-*

Hier. in reg. mon. c. 223.

trādi ad societatem vestram sanct a desideria incitent, vt affectu ad celestia moueatur. Do you know saith he what effect a Religious man produceth with his silence and Modesty? he silently, but efficatiously repreheds those who speake too much, and goe about with little Modesty & recollection, & makes thē ashamed of what they are, by seeing others such as they ought to be. These are they, sayth he, who people Religious houses, and who conserue them in vertue and sanctity; since that by their example they excit and stirre vp others to deuotion, and call sighes from their harts to send vp towards heauen. And this it is, which our B. Father requires of vs, where he says that we are to proceed in such manner, as to increase in deuotion and to prayse our Lord God, by considering one an other.

Reg. 26. sum.

It is recounted of *S. Bernard* that he wat of so singular modesty, as to make his companions compose and enter into themselues with the only sight of him; and there needed no more, to make the carefull how they behaue themselues, then to say; only looke *Bernard* comes.

And

And *Metaphrastes* and *Surius* relat of S. *Lucian* the Martyr in his life, that with the only sight of him, diuers Gentils were couerted to our holy fayth. Such as these are good preachers, and doe truly imitate the Glorious *S. Iohn* Baptist, of whom the sacred Scripture saith *Erat lucerna ardens & lucens. He was a lampe ardent, & brightly shining*, burning in himselfe with a great loue of God, & shining forth vnto his neighbours through the example of his admirable life; It ought therefore to be a great Motiue vnto vs, to remayne always modest and composed, that we edify our brethren & our neighbours with it, and bring forth that fruit, which we haue formerly spoken of: for otherwise where is the zeale and desire of the greater honour & glory of God, so proper vnto our Institut, if we neglect that which hath such force to gayne and edify them, and is so light and easy for vs to do? Ioan. 5. 35

How

How necessary Modesty is for our owne profit and aduancement.

CHAP. II.

IT is a cõmon doctrine of the Saints, that Modesty and the custody of our senses, is one of the principall meanes which we can haue to attaine vnto our owne spiritual profit and aduancemẽt, since that it aydes much to the custody of our hart, and interiour recollection, as also to conserue vs in deuotion; they being as it were the gates and portes by which all euill hath entrance into our hartes. *S. Hierome* vpon this passage of *Iob*: *Nunquid aperta sunt tibi porta mortis, & ostia tenebrosa vidisti?* Sayes that in the morall & tropologicall sense, the gates of death are our sensas; for as much as the death of sinne through them doth ẽter into our soule, following that saying of the Prophet *Hieremy*: *Ascendit mors per fenestras*. And he sayth, that they are called the obscure Gates, because they giue entrance vnto the darknes of sinne. *S. Gregory* doth also say the like,

Hieron. in Iob. 38. 17.

Hierem. 9 21.

like, and it is the common doctrine of holy Fathers, grounded in Philosophy: *Nihil est in intellectu, quod prius nō fuerit in sensu.* That nothing is in the vnderstanding, which hath not first passed by the senses, as the Gates which gaue it entrance. Now when the dores & gates of a house are well shut and guarded, all the family is in security, but when they are left open, and none attendes vnto them, in such manner as any one at all houres may come, and goe when he pleaseth, without once being questioned of any, the house is in great danger, and but ill assured, howsoeuer at least there can be no quietnes there, but a continuall noyse and passing vp and downe: and so is it with this interiour house of ours, where they who haue the custody of their senses are recollected & deuout, & they who do neglect the care thereof, haue neuer no peace nor quietnes in their harts. Greg. l. 18 moral. c. 2.

For this reason the Wiseman admoniseth vs: *Omni custodia serua cor tuum, quia ex ipso vita procedit* He sayes that we are to keep watch vpon our harts, and addes that we are to do it with all Prou. 4. 23

care

care & diligence: for to giue vs to vnderstand the great importance of it, seeing that in carefully watching the gats of our senses; we likewise set a sure guard vpon our harts. S. *Gregory* sayth: *Vnde nobis ad custodiendam cordis munditiã exteriorumq́; sensuum, disciplina seruanda est*, for the conseruation of the purity of our hart is required the guard and custody of our exteriour senses. And S. *Dorotheus* sayth: *Assuesce oculos non circumferre ad alienas & vanas res, hoc enim labores omnes monasticos deperire facit*. We should accustome our selues not to look about and bestow our eyes on vaine & impertinent thinges; for so we come to loose all that we haue laboured for since we came to Religion: all the fruit of many yeares, all the gaine of much toyle and many labours, comes easily and without perceauing it for to be lost by these gates of our exteriour senses, if we do not looke carefully vnto it, and we shall become not only deuoyed and robbed of all our good, but also full of imperfections in the place of them. And therefore *Thomas à Kempis* sayes excellent well, that a man comes

Greg. l. 21 mor. c. 2.

Dorith. serm. 21.

Thom. de Kempis.

presently

presently to loose that through his negligence which he did not gaine with out much care and vigilancy: assisted by the particular grace of God. And S. *Dorotheus* sayes in an other place: *Caue à multiloquio, hec enim sanctas ac rationales & à cælo aduenientes cogitationes gemitusq; extinguit*. Take heed (sayth he) of too much speech, for it wholly extinguisheth and deades in vs all those holy & rationall cogitations, which we receaued from heauen. And on the contrary S. *Bernard* sayth: *Iuge silentium & ab omni strepitu sæcularium perpetua quies, cogit cælestia meditari*. A continual silence, & perpetuall quiet free from all noyse of secular thinges, doth (in a manner) inforce vs to meditate on heauen, to lift vp our hartes to God, and to place in him all our affections. And speaking of the Modesty of our eyes, he sayth: *Eyes fixed on the ground doe alwayes greatly help to lift vp our harts to heauen*. And we do find it by experience, that when we go with our eyes cast downe and modestly composed, we neuer fayle of being recollected and deuout.

Doroth. serm. 20.

Bern. ep. 78.

Bernard. medit. de 12. grad. humilit.

For this cause the holy Fathers of

Egypt

Egypt (as Cassian recounts) were wont to say, That he who desired to attaine vnto a perfect cleanes & purity of hart, to haue a true feeling of deuotion, and enioy the sweetnes of recollection, ought to be deafe, blind, and dumbe, for as much as if these gates of his senses should but once be shut, his hart would be pure, and his imagination free and well disposed to treat and conuerse with God Almighty. But perhaps some one shall say; how is it possible for vs to be deafe, blind, and dumbe, who haue so frequent occasion to conuerse with our Neighbour, and are oftentime constrained both to see & heare diuers thinges more then we desire? For this, it is a good remedy so to heare thinges, as if we vnderstood them not, by letting them passe out as freely at the one eare as they come in at the other, without euer suffering our hartes to haue discourse with them, or enter into a liking of them, but shaking them of as soone as euer they do intrude themselues. S. Ephrem vnto this purpose, doth relate how a certaine Monke came ōce in great anxiety to an ancient Father, saying

Cassi. l. 4. de instit. renun. cap. 41.

Eph. tom. 2. cap. 73. de varia doc. p. 243

saying: The Abbot commandes me to go vnto the bake-house to assist the Baker, and there I shall find a company of idle boyes, who talke of nothing but impertinent thinges, vnto which it is no waies fit that I should giue any eare; and therfore for Gods sake tell me how I should carry my selfe in this circumstance: vnto whome the old Father answered: Haue you neuer obserued (sayd he) the children in the schoole, what a noyse they make when they are altogether, cunning and learning their lessons, which they are to recite vnto their Masters afterwards, among whō one doth not listen vnto another, but euery one attēds vnto his owne lesson, knowing that he is to giue account of that vnto his Master, who will neuer question him about the lessons of the rest? Do you the like, sayd he, and take no heed of any thing which the others say, or do, but only haue a care to discharge your owne office well, since it is of that alone which God shall exact an account of you.

We read of *S. Bernard* that he had his hart (as it were) so wholly ingul-

Saur. in c. 4. vita S. Born.

fed in God Almighty, that he saw as if he had not seene, and hearing was as if he did not heare; finally he seemed to put his senses to no vse at all, he was a whole yeare a Nouice, and in all that tyme knew not what the top of his cell was made of, or whether it were vaulted or plainly floored; there was three windowes or casements in the Church, and he neuer thought there had beene more then one, he trauailed almost a whole day together by a great Lakes side, and when afterwardes his companions vpon some occasion fell vpon mention of it, he asked them, whether they had seene it; for, for his part, he neuer obserued, or tooke any notice of it. And it is reported of the Abbot *Palladius*, that he remayned for twenty years together in his cell, without euer lifting vp his eyes vnto the roofe of it. In this manner may we liue in the midle of the world conuersing daily with our Neighbours, & yet remaine deafe, blind, and dumbe, and the noise and variety of obiects which we heare and see, will haue no power to hinder our spirituall profit.

Palad. in prat spirit.

How

How much they are deceaued, who make but light esteeme of thinges, and say perfection doth not consist therein.

CHAP. III.

FROM the precedēt discourse may be easily gathered, how much they are deceaued, who esteeme but lightly of these exteriour thinges, as Modesty, and Silence, & say that perfection doth not consist in them, but in the interiour and true and solid vertue. *Lipomanus* relates an example very proper for our present subiect out of *Pratum spirituale*, he sayes, That one of those ancient Fathers who liued in the deserts of *Scythia* going to *Alexandria* the capitall Citty of Egypt, to sell those panyars which he had made, saw there a certaine young Monke entring into a Tauerne, at which the good old man being much grieued, resolued with himselfe to expect his comming out, and to tell him his opinion of his courses; at last the young Monke came out, and this good Father taking him aside, told him: My

Prat. spir. cap. 194.

deare Brother, do you not cõsider how young you are, & how many the snares and deceites of the enemy to intrappe vs? Do you know the manyfold domages which a Monke receaues, by barely going along the streetes of the Citty, by reason of the many figures & representations of thinges, which through his eares and eyes do enter into his hart? how comes it then that you are so aduenterous to go into a Tauerne, where there is of both sexes so much ill company and resort, and where you are constrained, whether you will or no, to heare and see those thinges you would be loth. Therfore for Gods holy loue, deare sonne, do so no more; but retire your selfe from hence into the desert, where with the grace of God you may worke your saluation with all security. Vnto whome the young mã answered; Good Father, goe to your cell againe: true perfection doth not consist in that, but in the purity of hart: and as for me, my hart is pure, and that is all which God requires and lookes for. Whereupõ the good old man lifting his hands vp towardes heauen, cryed out & sayd:

O Lord

O Lord, mayst thou be euer blest and prayſed, I haue bene fiue & fifty yeares in the deſert of *Scythia* liuing with all poſſible care and recollection, and yet I could neuer arriue vnto this purity of hart: & ſee this good young man, who continually frequents the Innes & Tauernes here, hath attayned vnto it already! If this be your anſwere likewiſe I cõfeſſe vnto you, that it is true indeed how that eſſentiall perfection doth not cõſiſt in theſe exteriour thinges, but in the cleannes & purity of hart, & in true charity, and the loue of God. But you can neuer arriue vnto this perfection, vnles firſt you haue a particular eye and care vnto the cuſtody of your ſenſes, & make it your ſtudy, to go Modeſtly, & well compoſed in the exteriour.

S. *Bonauenture* notes this very well and giues for his reaſon, that by the meanes of this exteriour, we come to acquire and preſerue the interiour, it being as it were the Rampare and Bulwarke of our hart. Iuſt as we ſee, that Nature produceth not the tree without its leaues and barke, neither the fruit without its outward rind, but that it

Bonauent. opuſ. lib. 2. de profect. c. 22.

furnisheth & prouideth all things, with shelter and couerture, seruing both for ornament and conseruation; and so in like manner Grace, which workes in a like proportion vnto Nature, though with farre more perfection, produceth not the interiour of vertue without accompanying it with this exteriour, which is as the barke & rind by which vertue, interiour recollection, and puritty of hart is nourished and conserued; and this fayling, the other comes likewise to be deficient. Like as our health or corporall infirmity consisteth not in our exteriour, neither in our good or ill complexion, but in the disposition of the humour of our body; yet notwithstanding when we see one looke ill, we presently say, he is not well, he hath not his health, doe you not see the colour of your face, how pale and wan he is? How his eyes are sunke into his head? It is iust the same in matter of spirituall thinges.

Basil tract. de vera virginit. c. 2.

S. *Basil* declares this by a similitude which we may well make vse of, being warranted by his authority. First he supposeth this common doctrine and allegory

allegory of the Saints, that the exteriour senses are as the windowes, by which (as it were) the soule lookes out for to behold all thinges which passe abroad: & he sayes that there is as much difference betwixt a recollected, and a distracted soule, as betwixt an honest and an impudent woman. It is a wonder to see an honest Matrone looking out of the windowes; but the other, without all regard of her esteeme or fame, will be perpetually gazing out, at euery thing, speaking to this one, calling to another, and entertaining euery one who comes. There is the same difference, sayth S. *Basil* betwixt a recollected and distracted Religious man. It is no lesse then a wonder to see a Religious man who is knowne to be spirituall and reserued, looking out of the windowes of his senses, but he recollects and retires himselfe into the secretst corner of his hart, but you shall see the other, at euery turne staring out of the windowes, wondering at the passages of things, giuing eare to al that is sayd, talking, laughing, telling and hearing newes and still with one or o-

ther trifling away his tyme. It is true, the honour and dishonour of a woman doth not consist in being seene and noted to looke out of the windowes, or in abstayning from it; but that woman who should be alwayes delighted to be gazing out, who lightly enters into discourse, admits of courtship, and is familiar with euery one, doth giue apparant & shrewd signes of leuity, and it is sufficient, were she neuer so honest, to blemish her fame, and render her suspected: in like máner it is certaine that perfection consistes not in the custody of our senses and our tongue, but when the soule doth come to be delighted, for to looke out vpon exteriour things, to heare and see, and speake with promiscuous liberty, it shall neuer arriue to perfection, nor purity of hart.

And we are here to marke one point of great importance, which is, that as this exteriour confers great help vnto the composition & conseruation of the interiour; so in like manner, the interiour presently composeth the exteriour: *Vbi Christus est, Modestia quoq; est*. sayth S. *Gregory Nazianzen*, where Christ

Gregor. Nazian. epist. 162.

Christ is, there likewise is Modesty; when there is within a masculine solid vertue, there will presently shine forth a collat grauity & solidity in our speech and lookes, and maturity in our gate, our gestures, and all our motions: the weight and grauity of the interiour, sends forth solidity and maturity to the exteriour. And this is that modesty, which our B. Father requires of vs, proceeding from peace and true humility of the soule. It is no forc't nor fayned Modesty, nor any artificiall dissimulation: for such cannot be of any long continuance, but when it comes to the proofe and tryall, failes straight, and shewes forth what it is: but a modesty deriuing its selfe from the interiour, and the very bottome of the hart, proceeding like a cause from the effect out of a hart well composed, humble & mortifyed. *Reg.* 29.

From whence we may garher a rule infallible inough to know, whether a person be spirituall & goeth forwards and profits in perfection and vertue or no, which *S. Augustine* declares by this comparison: Iust as (sayth he) we per- *Aug. l.* 83. *q.* 71.

ceaue our selus, now we are beco n me, not to be taken or regard those sports and pastimes, with which when we were boyes we were so much delighted, the which if any one then should haue offered to haue barred vs from, we should haue taken it wonderous heauenly, although now we find no difficulty to be without them, yea we should be ashamed of them, considering our selues men, and them the bables and toyes of children; so sayth he, in the way of spirituall life, when a man comes once to haue some feeling and tast of God Almighty, to beare affection vnto vertuous thinges, to become a spirituall man, and go forwards in perfection, he finds no difficulty al all, to be depriued of all those sensuall pleasures and delight, in which he tooke so much satisfaction and content whilest he was yet but a child in vertue and perfectiō. Seing they are but the sports and pastimes of children and imperfect soules, and himselfe now growne a man: *VVhen I was a child* (sayth the Apostle) *I spoake as a child, I did conceit & imagine thinges like a child, but now being become*

1. Cor. 13. 11.

become a man, I haue left all those childish thinges. If you would therefore know whether you do go increasing and profiting in vertue, or els remaine a child still; consider with your selfe, whether you haue left of, and forgot all your old childish tricks: for if you are still delighted with the plaies & toyes of childrē, you are yet a child. If you yet take pleasure in that childishnes of giuing way and satisfying your senses, by sending your eyes with regarding euery vaine and curious thing, your eares with desire of hearing euery nouelty, your tongue with talking of idle and impertinent matters, you are yet but imperfect and a child, seing you are still delighted with the trifles and pastimes of little children and imperfect folkes. He who is a spirituall man, and come vnto perfect growth indeed in vertue, doth find no more gust and liking in these thinges, but laughs and sports at them, as a man would do at the toys & games of children, and would be ashamed to be busy himselfe with them.

Of

Of silence and the great good and profit which proceeds from it.

CHAP. IIII.

ONE of the meanes which shall greatly help vs to profit in vertue & attaine vnto perfection, is to refraine and mortify our tongue, and on the contrary, that which most hurts and hinders our spirituall profit, is our negligence and want of care in this. The Apostle *S. Iames* teacheth vs both these verities, where he says concerning the first, *Si quis in verbo non offendit, hic perfectus est vir.* *He who doth not offend in words is a perfect man.* And of the second: *Si quis putat se religiosum esse non refrenans linguam suam, sed seducens cor suum, huius vana est religio.* If any one doth thinke that he is pious & religious, & doth not refrayne his tongue, but seduceth his harte, this mans Religion is vayne. S. *Hieromes* makes vse of this authority of the Apostle to recommend the obseruance of silence, and says that for this reason the aũcient Fathers of the desert, groũding them-

Iacob. 2.3

Iacob. 1. 26.

Hier. in reg. mon. c. 22.

themselues vpon this sentence and doctrine of the holy Apostle, were wonderfull carefull of the obseruance of it, adding that himselfe had met with diuers of those holy Fathers, who for seauen yeares together had neuer spoken word. And *Dionysius Carthusianus* says, that by the vniuersal consent of all Religious Orders, silence is accounted one of the principall obseruances of Religious, and is maintayne with so much rigour of discipline, as euen in some holy Religious Orders, the breach of it is punished with publike chastisment. But let vs consider a little what the cause may be, that silence is so much and earnestly recommended to vs. Is it so great a matter to speake an idle word? What other harme can come of it, but only the losse of so much time as we are in speaking it? at the most it is but a small veniall sinne, which may easily with taking Holy water be washed away. But without doubt there is somewhat more in it, then a little losse of time; and it is of greater consequence the it seems to be, or els the Holy Scripture would neuer recommended it in

such

such particular māner: the Holy Ghost doth not vse to exemplify and exaggerat things, and sets them not out greater then they are vnto the shew: the Holy Father and Doctours of the Church vnto whome our Sauiour cōmunicats particular light, to the vnderstanding and explicating the Mysteries of the holy Scripture, do most amply declare the great profit which floweth forth from silence as from a bountious spring, & the great harmes which proceed from the contrary.

Basil. in reg. Fusius disp. 3. S. *Basil* says that it is of great profit, especially for those who are but new beginners, to inure and accustome thēselues to keep silence; first, vnto the end to learne to speake, vnto which diuers circumstances are requisit, and it is a poynt of no small difficulty, & seeing that to learne other sciences and artes we thinke the experiēce of diuers years not ill bestowed, if we may but arriue to be but our Crafts Maisters at the length, it is most reasonable that we should bestow the silence of some few yeares, to attayne that excellent knowledge to speake well, since they who will

will not apply theſelues to learne, can neuer arriue to any maſtery. But perhaps you will tell me, that by ſpeaking much we muſt come to learne to ſpeak, as all other artes and ſciences are learned by exerciſe. To this *S. Baſil* ſhall auſwere you, that the knowledge of ſpeaking well is not attayned but by holding our peace, & by long cuſtome of keeping ſilence: and he giues this reaſon for it, that ſeing to ſpeake well there are required ſo many circumſtances, & that we haue ben vſed ſo ſeldom to diſcourſe with theſe ſame circumſtances required, but vtter all which comes in our head, without regard of time or manner or any thing, ſilence produceth chiefly two effects, which learne vs this art of ſpeaking: well the firſt is, that through long ſilence we come to caſt into forgetfulnes thoſe ill formes of ſpeech vnto which we were accuſtomed in the world, which is a poynt of greateſt importance, in learning vs to ſpeake well, like as it is, to forget that which we haue vitiouſly learned. The ſecond is that by means of this ſilence & taciturnity we haue both

tyme

time aboundant and commodity to get a habit & forme of speaking wel; Since it affords vs the opportunity, to looke backe vpon the exáple of those aúcient Religious men, who had proceeded Masters in this art of speaking well, to the end to learne of them, & as it were new cast our selues in the mould of their example, of speaking with circúspection and maturity, letting no word passe without its true weyght and caution, like as the Prentises vse to behold their Masters worke, to learne the better for to imitate them? In like manner ought me to consider the laudable liues of others to conforme our owne vnto them by imitation. Behold in what manner that auncient Brother, & this other venerable Father speakes, with what a grace and affability he giues dispatch and contentment vnto all who haue discourse or businesse with him, euen then seeming at if he had nothing els to do only to satisfy & answere you when he is in the greatest presse of other occupations: you shall find him alwayes in an equall temper, neuer but cheerfull; and not like you giuing harsh

and

and rough answeres, when you haue any little busines more then ordinary. Regard that other when any thing is commaunded him by Obedience how cheerefully he answeres; I am content; I will doe it withall my harte; without any excuses, or once questioning who hath commanded it: marke this other, how carefull he is neuer to speak any thing which may disgust his Brother, neither in recreation, or at any other tyme, either to breake his iest, or shew his wit; but both in presence and behind their backes, he speakes with all, and of all, with great respect, esteeme and reuerence. Doe you learne of him to speake accordingly. Obserue that other, how he makes no reply, when he hath receaued any offensiue word, but quietly puts it vp, and dissembles it, as if he heard it not, in conformity to that saying of the Royall Prophet: *Factus sum sicut homo non audiens.* This man knowes well the art, to winne his brother & himselfe at once. Do you learne to carry your self in like manner, when you shall come in like occasions. For these two causes sayth S. *Psalm. 37. 15.*

Basil, is a wel & long cõtinued Silence most profitable : *For silence doth both beget forgetfulnes of ill, by discontinuance ; and affordes vs leasure to learne and informe our selues of those thinges which are good.*

S. *Ambrose*, and S. *Hierome* vpon these words of *Ecclesiasticus* ; *Tempus tacendi, & tempus loquendi*. There is a tyme to speake, and a tyme to hold our peace ; do authorise this which we haue sayd : and adde, that for this reason *Pythagoras* that auncient Philosopher, did exact of his Disciples, as the first lesson they were to learne, a cõtinual Silence for fiue yeares together : to the end that through so long a silence they might arriue vnto a perfect forgetfulnes of al the ill which they had euer learned ; & in frequently giuing eare to him, they might store themselues with sufficient matter to speake of afterwardes, and in this manner become excellent masters. And S. *Hierome* concludes in this manner his discourse : *Discamus itaq; & nos prius non loqui, & postea ad loquendum ora reseremus.* Let vs therefore first learne to hould our peace, and afterwards open our mouthes to speake. *Let vs be silent*

Amb. l. 1. offic. c. 10.

Hier. epist. 3. 7.

lent for a while (sayth he) *and wholly depend vpō those precepts which we shal heare; let vs account nothing to be right, and as it should be, which we haue not not learned; to the end that after a long silence, of schollers we may become Masters.* And although the Saints speake only of those who are beginners; neuertheles their discourse hath referēce to al. For eyther you haue beene long in Religion; or els but now begin. wil you refraine your tongue as a Nouice, or an auncient Religious mā? Choose which you will, if you are a Nouice, and like a Nouice would behaue your selfe; your first document must be to hold your peace, vntill, as we haue sayd, you haue learned what and how to speake: if you haue been long in Religion, & would carry your selfe, in such manner as becomes an auncient Religious man; you ought to serue as a patterne vnto Nouices, from whom they may learne for to compose their selues. But in my opinion, it were better you should behaue your selfe rather like an auncient Religious man, then like a Nouice, seeing of the two their obligatiō is the greater. You were

Nouice for to come to this, and your end of keeping silence so long, was to learne to speake. It is expected with good reason frō you, that after so long a time, you should know how to speak; and if as yet you are ignorant, as neuer hauing beene a good Nouice, in this you are to begin to be a good Nouice now, to the end you may attaine to the knowledge to speake, as you ought, when you ought, and of those thinges of which it becomes you to speake.

How Silence is an efficacious meanes to obtaine the guift of Prayer.

CHAP. V.

SILENCE doth not only serue to instruct vs, how we are to conuerse with men, but it is also a great and vse-full help, to teach vs how to discourse with God Almighty, and obtaine the guift of Prayer. So sayth S. *Hierome*, & he doth note, that for this cause those auncient Fathers had silence in so high esteeme: *For therfore* (sayth he) *those holy Fathers in the desert, instructed by the Holy*

Hier. reg. mon. c. 22.

Holy Ghost did observe silence with all diligence, as the cause of holy contemplation.

And S. *Diadochus* treating of Silence, sayth, *Praeclara ergo lex est Silentium, nihilq; aliud quàm mater sapientissimorum cogitatuum*, Silence is a rare & excellent law, and is nothing els then the Mother of most holy thoughts and cogitations. If you pretend therefore to the grace of prayer, and to become spirituall, if you seeke after the familiarity & conuersation with God, be obseruant of Silence; if you desire to haue your minde alwaies imployed with holy thoughts, and haue a supple eare to the inspiration of God Almighty, be carefull of silence and recollection. For as there are some who are deafe, through certaine impediments in the organ of their hearing, and others who vnderstand nothing of that which is sayd vnto them, by reason of some noyse which is made whilest others speake so in like manner, the noyse & shrilnes of words, the many affaires and businesses of the world, do hinder and render vs wholy deafe vnto the vnderstanding of those inspirations, by which God Al-

D. *Diad. l. de perfe. c. 70. in Bibl. SS PP. tom. 3*

mighty doth declare interiourly, what our duties are, and what we ought to do. God requires solitude for to discourse with our soules: *Ducam eam in solitudinem & loquar ad cor eius*, sayth the Prophet *Oseas*: I will lead her into the wildernes, and there I will speake vnto her hart; there she shall be cherished and fed with all deliciousnes: *Ecce ego lactabo eam*. There I will giue her to sucke from myne owne breast; signifying those graces and fauours which he bestowes vpon a soule, that is so happily retyred. S. *Bernard* saies, that God is a spirit, and not a corporall substance, and therefore he requires a spirituall & not a corporall solitude. And S. *Gregory* demandes: *Quid prodest solitudo corporis, si solitudo defuerit cordis?* Vnto what end is the solitude of the body, if there be wanting the solitude of the hart? That which God requires is, that you should build a mansion and cell in your hart, where you may decently treat with Almighty God, and his diuine Maiesty may take delight and pleasure to conuerse with you; for so may you say with the Prophet, that you haue taken

Bern. ser. 40. in Cat.

Greg. l. 30 moral. c. 12.

taken flight, & haue retyred your selfe into the desert: *Ecce elongaui fugiens & manſi in ſolitudine.* Neither is it neceſſary that you ſhould make your ſelfe an Hermite to accompliſh this, nor retire and withdraw your ſelfe therfore from dealing & cõuerſing with your Neighbour, but if you deſire to conſerue your ſelfe alwayes in deuotion, and to be ſtill diſpoſed, and well prepared to apply your ſelfe to prayer without any difficulty, be obſeruant of ſilence. S. *Diadechus* ſayes well, that euen as the heat of a Bath diminiſhes and vapours forth, when the doore is often opened; ſo alſo with ſpeaking much, the feruour of our deuotion through our mouthes is loſt, the hart is incontinently powred forth, and the ſoule findes it ſelfe bereaued of all good thoughtes. And we may eaſily perceaue how ſuddenly all the iuyce of deuotion is loſt, when we but open our mouthes, to ſpeake with neuer ſo little intemperance, and how our hart is fleeting through our lippes. Moreouer if you deſire to haue any vacant tyme, and purchaſe many quiet houres to apply your ſelfe to prayer,

Pſal. 54. 3

D. Diad. vbi ſupra.

do but keep Silence, and you will see, you shall haue no want of tyme to treat with God, and set all right in your interiour. O how well hath the denout seruant of God Almighty sayd! *If thou wouldst but withdraw thy selfe out of the occasions of superfluous speeches and idle figarys here and there, as also from hearing rumours & noueltie, you would find sufficient and conuenient tyme to meditate on good and holy things.* But if you be delighted with talking, & dissipate your selfe through your exteriour senses, it is no marueile if you be alwayes complaining for wāt of time, & neuer find sufficient to discharge your ordinary functions. And so we read of the children of Israell, that they could not make an end nor finish their daily taske, but they were punished and corrected for it, because they went searching vp & downe the fields to gather strawes.

Thom. de Kempis.

Exod. 5. 12.

We are likewise here to consider another point of great importance, and very spiritual, which is; that as Silence is the cause of holy contemplation; so likewise prayer, contemplation, and conuersation with God Almighty, do

cause

cause and produce this Silence. *Moyses* sayd vnto God: *Ex quo loquutus es ad seruum tuum, impeditioris & tardioris linguæ sum.* Since that tyme as thou spakest to thy seruant, I am become more staunch and slow of speech. And the Prophet *Hieremy* when he begun to speake with God Almighty sayd, that he was become a child againe, & knew not how to speake. Whereupon S. *Gregory* obserues, that spirituall men who frequently conuerse with God almighty, become presently dumbe vnto all worldly thinges, and it is irksome vnto them to speake or heare of them: & that because they desire to discourse and heare of nothing els, then what they loue, and haue placed their hartes vpon, all other thinges being fastidious and displeasing to them: *Valde namq; insolens atq; intolerabile æstimant, quicquid illud non sonat quod intus amant.* And this experience sets before our eyes: for do but obserue your selfe, after God Almighty hath bestowed some extraordinary fauour vpon you in prayer, when you rise from thence with deuotion, what little desire & list you haue

Exod. 4. 10.

Hiere. 1.6.

Greg. l. 7. moral. c. 6.

to discourse with others, to cast about your eyes, or hearken after new and curious things, but it seemes, that some body hath curbed your mouth, and bridled your senses vp: and what is the cause of this? but only because you are buryed within, and entertaine your thoughtes with thinking vpon God; & therefore you haue no need, nor care to seeke abroad to entertaine your selfe with the delight of any exterior thing, and on the contrary when one goeth ranging and bestowing himselfe on things that are without him, it is a signe that he hath no spirit, no deuotion, nor any thing to entertaine himselfe within, according to the obseruation of that holy man: *VVhence comes it* (saith he) *that we speake and conuerse together so willingly, when notwithstanding we neuer returne to silence without some detriment of our conscience? the reason is, because by talking together we seeke to comfort our selues and vnburthen our harts wearyed with diuers cogitations: speaking & thinking with far more willingnes of that which we either loue or desire, or those thinges which are the most contrary to vs.* We cannot liue without

Thom. de Kempis.

some

some contentment and delight, & whē we enioy it not with God in our interiour, we presently go in pursuit of it vnto exteriour things. And this is the reason why in Religion we esteeme this and euery exteriour defect to be so great, and meriting so much reprehension, how euer sleight & little in thēselues, seeing these deffects of the exteriour, as breaking silence, losse of time, and the like, are signes of small profit, and great scarcity of interiour vertue, and also shew that they haue no spirituall recollection, and haue yet no tast of God, nor heauenly thinges; since they want matter within, to entertain themselues, and haue not builded them an interiour house for God to inhabit in. When we see a Cabinet without a locke, we presently imagine there is no treasure within. When the Nut is light and rebounds easily, it is a signe it hath no kernell in it. This is the marke we haue to know the vertue & goodnes of these things, and therefore we are so curious to see they do not want them.

That

That silence is one of the principall meanes, to profit and attaine vnto perfection.

CHAP. VI.

FATHER *Natalis* a very learned and spirituall man, sayes one very particular and remarkeable thing of Silence, from whence the great importãce of it may appeare, which although vnto some it may seeme spoken with Hyperbole, and by way of exaggeratiõ, yet it is notwithstãding most true, and approued by experience. He sayes that to reforme a Religious house, yea the whole Religion, there needes no more, then to bring them to be obseruãt in matter of Silence: let Silence but be obserued in your house, and I will warrant your reformation. It seemes there can be nothing more sayd in prayse of Silence, since in this is cõprehended all; and the reason of this is, that when there is Silence in a Religious house, euery one applyes himselfe to that for which he is entred into Religion, that is to his progresse in spirit and

and perfection; but when Silence is not kept, presently there is nothing but murmurations, priuate whisperinges, detractions, and particular friendships conserued by prattling, and familiarityes: then they loose tyme themselues, and make others do the like, with diuers other inconueniences arysing from hence, vnto the ruine of the house and discipline. And we see moreouer, that when there is not Silence in a house, it seemes rather a house of seculars then Religious men; and on the contrary when Silence is obserued, it appeares not only a Religious house, but euen a Paradise. You no sooner enter in the doares, but you find the gratefull odour of sanctity, vnto which that solitude and silence which is there, rayseth vp the hartes of euery one who comes, & silently moues them to deuotion, *Verè Dominus est in loco isto, non est hic aliud nisi domus Dei, & porta Cæli.* Assuredly our Lord is in this place, and this is no other, then the house of Almighty God, and the gate of Heauen. And this I say to euery one in particular, reforme your selfe but in matter of silence, and

Gen. 28. 16.

I do,

I do assure your reformation in the rest. We find it by experience that after much effusion in speech, we perceaue our selues in our Examẽs to haue fallen in many imperfections: *Vbi verba sunt plurima, ibi frequenter egestas.* There is nothing but want, misery, and cause of griefe; wheras if we haue been exact in poynt of silence, we shall hardly find matter to make our Examine of, *Qui custodit os suum, custodit animam suam* sayes the Wiseman, he who hath custody of his mouth, hath custody of his soule; One *Carilus* a man of choyce learning, and principal authority among the Lacedomiãs, being asked the reason why *Lycurgus* had enacted no more Lawes, answered that for those, who speake so sparingly as the Lacedemonians did, a few lawes would suffice, *Qui pauco sermone vtuntur, legibus multis non indigent,* so that silence is not only sufficient to reforme particular persons, but euen wholle houses and religions. And for this cause, those auncient Fathers haue esteemed it so much, and all Religious Orders with one consent haue placed that of Silence among their principall obseruances,

Prou. 14. 23.

Prou. 13.

obseruances. For this reason likewise sayth *Dionysius Carthusianus*, Saint Iames the Apostle hath sayd that he, who offends not in speaking, is a perfect man, and that he who imagins himselfe to be pious and religious, not refrayning his tongue, deceiues himselfe & his religion is vayne. *Iac. 1. 26. & 3. 2.*

Let each one therfore seriously consider with himselfe, how little is required vnto perfection, and how easy the meanes are to attayne vnto it. Do you desire to make great profit in vertue, and acquire perfection? be obseruant of silence, for so saith the Apostle *S. Iames* you shall attayne vnto it, if you desire to be spirituall, and to haue the gift of prayer, haue a care of Silence, for by this meanes say the holy Saints it is to be obteyned; and on the contrary if you haue no care nor no regard of Silence you shal neuer arriue to any eminēcy in perfection, neuer make prayer well, neuer be spirituall; In a word, be Iudges your selfe, and cal to mynd a little, whether you haue euer knowne a man effused in speech, either spirituall or giuen to contemplation, or

making

making any profit in vertue at all? *Nunquid vir verbosus iustificabitur*, sayes holy *Iob*? Shall a man full of words be iustifyed? and S. *Gregory* sayes commenting therupon, it is most certaine that a man who speaks much shal not be iustifyed, nor euer make any profit, that is worth the speaking of; which he confirms with diuers authorities of holy Scripture, as with that among others of the Prophet *Dauid*: *Vir linguosus non dirigetur in terra*, a talking man shall not be directed vpon the earth, he shall not profit, he shal make no progresse forwards, but fall vnder that curse and malediction of the Patriarch *Iacob*; *Effusus es sicut aqua, non crescas*, you haue powred out your hart, out of your mouth and senses, and haue taken delight & pleasure in these exteriour things; you shal not increase, you shall not prosper, nor be fortunate.

Iob. 12.

Greg. l. 1. mor. al. c. 2.

Psal. 138. 12.

Gen. 49. 4

The Saints do compare very properly, those who haue no custody of their tongue, to a Vessell without a Lid or couer, which God commaunded to be accounted for vncleane, *Vas quod non habuerit operculum, nec ligaturam desuper*

Num. 19. 15

super immundum erit. And that because it is apt to receaue all vncleannes falling into it, and be presently filled vp with dust and durte and euery sordid thing; so also whosoeuer keeps his mouth still opē with effused speech, shal be straight wayes filled with sinnes & imperfections, as the Holy Ghost sayes and repeates so often: *Qui multis vtitur verbis, laedit animam suam.* He who vseth many wordes doth (as it were) wound his owne soule. And in an other place: *In multiloquio non deerit peccatum.* And yet againe: *In multis sermonibus inuenietur stultitia.* Foolishnes is found in many wordes; and would to God our experience of this were not so infallible and frequent as it is. S. *Gregory* sayes excellent wel: We begin at first to speake of good & profitable things; from thence we passe to idle and vayne discourses, then we presently fall to iesting and merrimēt, which is instantly followed with exceptious and angry wordes, vntill at last our tongue by little and little comming to be in vse, and the desire increasing of examplifying for our greater credit and reputation, we find

Eccl. 20. 8

Prou. 10. 19.

Eccl. 5. 2.

Greg. l. 7. *moral. cap.* 17. & 3.

our selues, before we are aware, intãgled in vntruths, spiteful, malicious, & most hurtfull wordes & so beginning sparingly to speake, we fall at last into wild intemperance and excesse; & that discourse which only in sport began, comes to end in detraction, and rancord bitternes. *Albertus Magnus* proceedes yet further, & sayes: *Vbi non est taciturnitas, ibi homo de facili ab aduersario superatur*. Where there is no silence, a man is easily ouercome by his aduersary. And he cites that of the Prouerbes to confirme his saying: *Sicut vrbs patens & absque murorum ambitu; ita Vir qui non potest in loquẽdo cohibere spiritum suum*. That man who cannot refraine his speech is like a citty lying open, without the defence of walles. On the which wordes *S. Hieronme* sayes, That as a citty without wals and dismantled, is in great danger of being sacked by the enemy; so he who is not defended with this wall of Silence, lyes open to the enemy, and in apparant danger of being ouercome by euery tentation. And we may giue particular reasons for it, for euen as a man whose thoughts are alwaies wandring, and

Albert. de virtut. cap 31.

Prou. 25. 28.

Hier. idem Greg. 3 p. past. c. 13. & lib. 7. moral. c. 25.

and neuer thinks on any thing he doth, may easily be couſened and deceaued, wheras it is a hard matter to ouerreach one, who is alwayes circumſpect and wary; in like manner, he who hath no care of Silence may easily be deceaued by the enemy, seeing he is alwayes diſtracted, and occupyed in thinking of impertinent thinges: but one who is obſeruant of silence, and recollected, ſtands euer vpon ſo ſure a guard, as it will be no easy matter for the Diuell to deceaue, and lead him into illuſion.

That, to be obſeruant of Modeſty, Silence, & Recollection, doth not bring vs into a kind of dumpishnes, but rather makes vs cheerefull, and liue more content.

CHAP. VII.

FROM that which hath been ſayd, followes a thing worthy of obſeruation concerning this ſubiect wherof we ſpeake; which is, that this recollection, this cuſtody of our tongue and of our eyes, this harkening to nothing but that which may concerne vs, this becomming

comming deafe, blind, and dumbe for God Almightys sake, is not to lead a sad & melãcholy life, but rather a pleasant and contented one, and so much more delectable then the other, as the conuersation and familiarity of this soueraigne sweetnes & high maiesty, vnto which this recollection doth inuite and lead vs, surpasseth the delight of all humane society. *S. Hierome* sayes: *Viderint alij quid sentiant; vnusquisq; enim suo sensu ducitur: mihi oppidum carcer, & solitudo paradisus est*. Let others take delight in what they please; for euery one followes that which he likes best: to me the Citty seemes a prison, & the desert a Paradise. And S *Bernard* sayes: *Nunquam minus solus, quàm cum solus*. I am neuer lesse alone, then when I am alone; then I am best accompanied, then most glad and most delighted, since I enioy that which alone can *satiat me*, & bring a true contentment to the hart; which is to treat and conuerse with Almighty God. To such as inioy not these interiour discourses, who know not what is spirit, what is prayer, and haue no tast nor gust in spiritual things, it is true indeed

Hier. epist. 4. ad Rust. mon. de viuendi norma.

Bern. epist ad Frat. de monte Hei

deed this life seemes tedious, melancholy, and sad; but not to holy and good Religious men.

From hence we may discouer another deceit, which is: that as the theefe, imagines euery one as bad as himselfe; so there are some who when they see another recollected and deuout, carrying his eyes low, and not talking with euery one he meets, as they are vsed to do, imagine presently, that he is in som great tentation, or els doth liue a life full of great sadnes and solitude, yea sometymes they proceed so farre as to affirme so much. And others there are so simple, as not to dare to proceed with such modesty and Silence, as otherwise they would; for feare they should be mocked and reproached for it of others. Such as those who scoffe at others vertuous proceeding, are to be most wary, & take great heed that they vse not, or rather abuse not their want of discretiō and deuotion vnto the harme and iniury of others; because they know not how to be silent or recollected themselues: they thinke others find as much difficulty in it as they, or perhapes are

therfore offended at an others Modesty, because it is a continuall reprehension of their immodesty, and want of recollection, and for that cause cannot away with it. Haue patience and suffer him to go on his way, and exercise himselfe in those vertuous acts, in which he finds more perfect ioy and contentment, then you in yours, seeing it is that solide and spirituall delight, of which the Apostle speakes: *quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes.* They are alwayes ioyfull: whilest they seeme to be sad.

2. Cor. 6. 10.

This is that which *Seneca* aduised his friend *Lucius*: If true ioy (sayth he) consists not in the exteriour, but in the hart within; like as gold, & other pretious mettals, are not found in the superficies of the earth, but deeply hidden in their veines & mines; in like manner, that is not true ioy and contentment, which appeares without, whilest we laugh and talke, and freely do conuerse with others, since this is not it which satiates the soule, but that which like pure gold lyes hidden in the veines and inmost of the hart. True ioy and contentment consists in hauing a good cō-

Seneca lib. 3. ep. 23. ad Lucil. de sol. & quid.

science,

science, in a generous spirit in contemning the world, and in a mind lifted vp aboue all worldly things.

Of certaine Circumstances, to be obserued in speaking.

CHAP. VIII.

PONE *Domine custodiam ori meo, & ostium circumstantiæ labijs meis*. The B. Saints and Doctours of the Church S. *Ambrose*, and *S. Gregory* treating of those great harmes & euills which proceed from the tõgue, of which the holy Scripture makes frequent mention, especially the bookes of wisedome; & cõmending most particularly vnto vs the obseruance of Silence, as a meanes to free vs from many dangers and inconueniences, do say: *Quid? igitur mutos nos esse oportet?* What do you then require? Would you haue vs to be alwaies dumbe? *Minime*. No, say the Saints, we exact not that of you, seeing the vertue of Silence consists not in not speaking, no more then the vertue of temperance in not eating, but in eating when and

Psal. 140. 3.

Ambr. l. 1. offic. cap. 3 Greg. l. 7. moral. c. 17

what we ought, to abstaine from all that may exceed: so in like manner the vertue of Silence doth not consist in neuer speaking; but in knowing when it is fit tyme to speake, and when to hold our peace. And they alleadge this sentence of *Ecclesiasticus*: *Tempus tacendi, & tempus loquendi*. And therefore there is required great discretion, to doe these thinges in their conuenient times: for it is as well a vice to hold our peace when we ought to speake, as to speake when we should be silent. And of these two thinges, say these holy Saints, the Prophet admonisheth vs in those alleadged wordes: *O Lord, set a guard vpon my mouth*. And what guard is it, O holy Prophet, which you desire? *A gate of circumstance vnto my lippes*. *S. Gregory* obserues very well, that *Dauid* desires not of God, so to wall & damme vp his mouth, that it may speake no more, but only a gate which may open and shut againe in conuenient tyme: to giue vs to vnderstand, that in due tyme we are to be silent and close vp our speech, & in due time to opē our mouth to speak; and that herein the discretion & vertue

Eccl. 3. 7.

tue of Silence doth consist. And for this cause the Wiseman demaunded of God: *VVho shall set a guard vpon my mouth, and impresse a sure seale vpon my lippes, that I may not faile through them, and my tongue may not be the losse of me?* There are so many conditions & circūstances required to speak as it behooues, that with good reason the Wiseman feared, least his tongue might be the losse and ruine of him, and therefore demaunded this direction for to know when conueniently to open his mouth to speake, & when likewise to close it vp againe, seeing the wāt of any one circumstāce is sufficient to render defectiue the whole discourse, wheras to speake precisely wel indeed, requires the concurrance of euery circumstance, and that no one be wanting, *Quia bonum consurgit ex integra causa, malum autem ex singularibus defectibus.* There is this difference betwixt good and ill, and betwixt vice and vertue, that to make a thing vertuous is required that all circumstances, none excepted, do concurre; wheras to make it vitious, it is inough, if any single circumstance do want. Eccl. 22. 23. & c. 28. 29.

The circumstances which according to S. *Basil, Ambrose, Bernard,* & others, are commonly required vnto the end, that what we speak be good, are for the most part these. The first & chiefest is, to haue a principal regard vnto that we are to say. And nature it selfe doth sufficiently insinuate, with how great circumstance and warines we ought to speake, by hauing inclosed the tongue vnder so sure a ward and custody, imploying vnto that end two barres or gates, the one of the teeth, the other of the lippes, ordayning a wall and afterwardes another counterscarpe for custody of the tongue; whereas it hath plac't no guard, nor any let or barre to hinder accesse vnto the eares, and that to giue vs thereby to vnderstand, both the difficulty which there is, and caution necessary to be had in speakiug, as also with what facility and promptitude we are to heare, according to that saying of the Apostle S. *Iames*: *Let euery man be swift to heare, but in speaking slow, wary and circumspect*. And this nature seemes to giue vs to vnderstand from the fashoning and framing of the tongue,

Basil in reg. boni. 208. & in constit. monast. c. 12.

Ambr. l. 1. offic. c. 10.

Bern. de ordine vit. meri. inscli. cap. 6.

Iac. 1. 10.

tongue, there being two veines in it, the one proceeding from the hart, and the other ascending vp vnto the braine, where the Philosophers place the seat of the vnderstanding, and this to signify vnto vs, that our workes ought to proceed from our hartes, and to be gouerned according to the prescript of reason. And so the first rule which S. *Augustine* giues vs to speake well, is: *Omne verbum prius veniat ad limam, quàm ad linguam*. Euery word is to passe the file before the tongue: it is to be well pondered in the interiour of the hart, & polished & squared by the rule of reason before it hath free passage through the mouth. And this is the difference, which the *Ecclesiastike* makes betwixt a Wisemã & a Foole: *The hart of the foolish is in their mouth, & the mouth of the wise in their hart.* The fooliſh haue their harts in their mouthes, becauſe they are alwaies ſubiect to their tongue, & the vnſeaſõable deſire to ſpeake: & therefore they vtter whatſoeuer comes firſt to the mouth, their harts affording conſent as readily, as if the tongue & it, were both one thing, but the Wiſe do cõfine their tongue *Eccleſ.* 21. 29.

tongue vnto the narrow limits of their harte, where it learnes al, which it is to say, informing its selfe with reason, their tongues being trayned vp and rẽdred subiect to their hartes, and not made Masters of their harts to rule thẽ at their pleasure, as the tongues of the foolish do.

S. *Cyprian* sayes, that euen as a moderate man, doth not let any food passe downe into his stomack, before he haue well chewd it in his mouth; so a wise and prudent man will not giue way that any word should passe his mouth which hath first not been well weighed and pondered in his hart; seeing that oftentymes from inconsiderate and vnaduised wordes, great harmes and quarels haue proceeded. It is the saying of another holy man, that we should be as sparing to open our mouthes to speake, as to open our purses to pay mony away, in which circumstãce we see how wary men are, how slow, how circũspect, how leasurely they open their purses, considering attentiuely, if they owe the debt or no, and how much the summe. And euen with the same eau-

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tion are we to open our mouthes to ſpeake, hauing firſt regard whether it is requiſit we ſhould ſpeake, and what we ought to ſay, being as carefull to vtter no more words then we muſt needs, as that other would be to pay out no more mony, then what he ows; which is the ſame *S. Bonauenture* ſays, a man ought to be as reſerued in ſpeaking, & as niggardly in his words, as a riche Miſer in ſpending of his treaſure. *Bonau. 1. 2. opus. lib. 2.*

S. Bernard not content with this ſays yet further: *Antequam verba proferat, bis ad limam veniant, quam ſemel ad linguã*: he requires that our words ſhould paſſe twice the file of reaſon, before we admit thẽ once vnto the tounge, which agrees with that which *S. Bonauenture* hath left written in an other place. *S. Ephrem* ſays according to the relation of the Holy Abbot *Ammonius*, that we are to communicat firſt with God Almighty, that which we are to ſay, together with the reaſon and cauſe which incits vs for to ſpeake, and then ſpeake as one who therein accompliſheth the will of God, which requires in thoſe occaſiõs that we ſhould ſpeake: & this *Bernar. in ſpecu. diſc. cap. 5.*

is

is the chiefest circumstance which is required to speake well; which if we shall obserue, we shall with ease be punctuall in the rest.

The second circumstance to be obserued in speaking, is the end and intention wherby we are moued to speake, for it is not sufficient that our words be good, but it is likewise requisit that they be spoken vnto a good end; seing as *S. Bonauenture* says there are some who will maintayne good & pious discourse only to appeare spirituall; and others to shew their grace & faculty in speaking; of the which one is dissimulation and hypocresy, and other Idlenes and vanity.

The third circumstance says *S. Basil* is, attentiuely to consider with our selues, who speakes, vnto whome, & before whome we speake: and he followes this argument, with excellent documents, teaching youth how they are to speak before those who are more auncient, and they who are not Priests, before those who are; grounding his whole discourse vpon the authority of the sacred Scripture; *Noli verbosus esse in multitudine*

Eccles. 7. 15.

multitudine Presbyterorum. It shewes a good education, and is a reuerent comlynes to see youth silente in the presẽce of Priests & aged men. *S. Bernard* saies that youth honours age by being silent in its presence, which is a kind of reuerence, obseruance and regard: and he giues a worthy reason for it: *Silentium est maximus actus verecundiæ*. Silence is a principall act of bashfullnes, which is a becomming ornament of youth. S. *Bonauenture* doth also in a more expresse manner declare the same, saying: that as the feare of God composeth and sets the interiour right, respectiuely vnto Almighty God; so bashfullnes composeth & orders the exteriour, conseruing it modest, reuerent, and silent, in the Superiours presence.

Bernar. de ordin. vitæ & morum instit.

Bonau. de infer. nouit p. 1. c. 18.

The fourth circumstance according to S. *Ambrose*, is to haue regard vnto the tyme when we are to speake. Seing it is one of the principal points of prudẽce to doe euery thing in its conuenient tyme: *A wiseman will hold his peace vntill his tyme come to speake, but the idle and indiscret will obserue no tyme*. And the holy Ghost sayes of him who is punctuall in this

Eccl. 20. 7

this obseruance of speaking in his time:
Prou. 25. 11. *He is like golden Apples in siluer beds, who speakes that which he sayes in due tyme*. As golden bowls or apples haue a peculiar grace, and do much take the eye when they stand vpon the siluer pillars of a bed: so gratefull a thing it is, to speake in conuenient time; when as on the cõtrary, how euer that be good we say, yet if it be not spoken in tyme, it hath
Eccles. 20. 32. no grace, nor any decency: *A parable or sententious speech is not accepted when a foole speaketh it, for he speaketh it not in its tyme.* Vnto this circumstance is also referred the interrupting of others when they speak, which is a signe of want of breeding, and little humility. It is no good tyme to speake whilest another is speaking: *In medio sermonum non adycias loqui*,
Eccl. 11. 8. sayes the Wise man, haue patience vntill the other haue ended his discourse, and then with good manners may you begin with yours. Vnto which purpose may be reduced that which is added in the same place: *Doe not answere a word*,
Prou. 18. 13. *vntill you haue heard all*. And in another place it is sayd: *He who answers before he hath heard, declares himselfe to be a foole, & worthy*

worthy reprehension, and oftentimes is the occasion of his own shame, by answering nothing to the purpose whilst concluding in his own imagination what their discourse will be, they speach of no such matter, and so that which he says, hath no reference to the discourse in hand. S. Basil concerning our answers giues vs yet an other aduertisement, which is, that when an other is demaunded of any thing, we should be silent & not make the answere for him, and when there are diuers in the company, and any thing be proposed vnto the to giue their iudgement of, vnlesse by name our aduice be asked, it is a point of little humility, to prefer our selues so much before others, as to vndertake to giue a resolution for them all; be silent vntill in particular your aduice be asked. Basil. vbi supra.

The fift Circumstance required by the Saints for to speake well is *loquendi modus* the manner of speaking, and gouerning of our voyce which is that which our rule requireth of vs in these words all are to speake with a low voice as befits Religious men, and this is

one of the principall circumstances of silence, or rather the greatest part or portiõ therof. S. *Augustin* vpon those words of *Martha* to her sister, when our Sauiour Christ went to rayse *Lazarus* from death, *Et vocauit Mariam sororem suam silentio dicens, Magister, adest & vocat te.* And she called her sister Mary in silence, saying, our Master is heer, & cals for you, The Saint demands, how she could speake in silence, since she vttered these words our maister is heer and calls for you, and he answereth that to speake with a low voyce is to be silent; and in conformity to this, when Religious mẽ do speake in this manner in their offices we may say with good reason there is silence kept, but whẽ they speake with a loud voyce, although they speake of necessary thing, yet the manner of speaking is a breach of silence. In so much as to the end that silence may be kept in particular offices, and aswell the whole house appeare a Religious family, as we Religious men, it is necessary to fauour our voyces and speake low. S. *Bonauenture* says it is a great fault in a Religious man, to speake a loud, & that it

Aug. tract 49. super Ioan. 1. operat. 11. à 8

Bonau. in specul. dis. part. 4. c. 5

suffices that they speake so, as to be heard and vnderstand of those who are neare vnto them, & if you haue occasion to speake to any one who stands farre off, goe vnto him where he is; for it stands not with Religious modesty, for to call out aloud to any one: and the Saint likewise nots, that the time of repose and recollection, doth yet require a voice more moderatly soft to the end that we may not disquiet nor trouble others deuotions, and rest. Which moderation of speaking with a low voyce is likewise to be obserued, in other particular places, as in the Sacristy, Gate, and Refectory.

Vnto this circumstance of speaking low, *S. Bonauenture* adioyns that other, of speaking with a seren and cheerfull countenance, in auoyding all wryings and gesturs of our mouth, the opening or shutting of our lipps to much, the winking & rowling of our eyes, wrinkles and frownes in the forhead, contraction of the nose, shaking our heads acting with our hands, and accompanying our speech, with our whole bodyes gesture, which are all compre-

hēded & prohibited by our B. Father in his rules of modesty. An other appēdix is added by *S. Ambrose* & *S. Bernard* vnto this circumstance which is. *vt vox ipsa non sit remissa, non fracta, nihil femineum sonans, sed formam quandam & regulam, ac succum virilem reseruans*, that the voyce should not be nice and mincing, not fayned or quauering, nor haue any sound of effeminacy in it, but keeping a certaine forme & measure, sauouring of manlike and becoming grauety, neuertheles in reprehending this manner of nice and affected speaking it is not their intent to commend a rough harshnesse, and inciuility: *Sed vt molliculum, aut infractum, aut vocis sonum, aut gestum corporis non probo, ita neque agrestem ac rusticum*. but as they approue not that manner of speaking which hath bin said, so do they as little allow of a rude blunt and rusticall kind of speach. The speech of a Religious man, must be so tempered with grauity, as it may be both gratefull, & delightfully winning, and although a moderation is alwayes to be had in speaking, yet then we are in most particular manner to be obseruant

Amb. lib. offic. cap. 20.

Bern. de orat. vitæ & mortis.

uant of it, when we are to admonish or reprehend any one, for if that be not done, in a good and requisit manner, it is in vaine to hope, to haue it followed by any good effect. *S. Bonauenture* says very well, that he who corrects and reprehends whilst himself is in choller and passion, seems rather to to do it out of impatience, and to afflict the other, then out of charity and zeale and desire of his amendement, *Virtus cum vitio non docetur*, vertue is not learneth or tought by vice, patience by impatience, nor humility by pride and hawtines, he whome you reprehend is edifyed more, & will be more profited by the example of your mildues & patience, then with all the reasons which you can affoard him. And so *S. Ambrose* says, *Monitio sine asperitate, hortatio sine offensione*, you are to admonish without sharpnesse, and exhort without giuing occasion of offece: and to confirme this, is that saying of the Apostle *S. Paul* alledged, *seniorem ne increpaueris sed obsecra vt patrem*. Do not chide or rebuke him who is auncient, but pray & beseech him as a Father.

Bona de infer. monit.

Ambr. lib. 1. offic. c. 22.

1. Tim. 5. 1.

Likewise with good reason they thinke them worthy of reprehension, who speake with affectation, to be accounted eloquent & discreet, & also thinke those preachers richly meriting reproufe, who ſtudy to vtter themſelues in choyce and polit words, and make particular profeſſion, of being curious in it, wheras by this meanes the ſpirit & fruict of their ſermons are loſt, for they ſay a good Preachers words muſt be lik watter, which is ſo much the better the leſſe taſt it hath.

To conclude the circũſtances which are required to ſpeake wel, are ſo many as to fayle in none of them might be eſteemed as a miracle: and therefore the beſt defence we haue is to retyre and ſhelter our ſelues vnder a quiet ſilence, where without putting our ſelues to any other labour then to hold our peace, we remayne free from all thoſe daungers and inconueniences which do attend the occaſions of ſpeech, according to that ſaying of the Wiſeman. *He who hath care of his mouth, and his tongue deffendes his ſoule from many ſtraightes, and daungers.* And one of theſe auncient

Pro. 21. 23.

Fa-

Fathers also sayd *In omni loco, si tacitur-nus fueris, requiem habebis* in all places if you be but silent, you shall be at rest, & it is a saying of Seneca: *Nihil æque prodest quam quiescere, & minimum cum alijs loqui, secum plurimum*, there is nothing auayls vs so much, as to be at rest, & discourse rarly with others, frequently with our selues. That sentence of the Abbot Arsenius which according to Surius he not onely often sayd but sung, is much renowned: *Me sæpe pœnituit dixisse, nunquam autem tacuisse*, I haue often repented my selfe to haue spoken, but neuer to haue held my peace. The like is also reported of Socrates, and Seneca giues the reason of it, saying, that which we do not speake, we may vtter afterwards in conuenient tyme, but that which is ōce sayd can neuer be recalled, *Et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum*, sayth that other Poet. S. Hierome sayth, *Lapis emissus est sermo prolatus*, a word once spoke, is like a stone which we throw out of our hand, which after we haue ōce cast from vs we cānot hinder from flying and doing mischiefe. And therfore sayth the same Saint, it is ex-

Seneca ep. 107.

Arsenius.

Horat. ep. 19. lib. 1.

Hier. ep. de virgin. serm.

expedient that we first considere what we are to say, before we let our words depart from vs, since afterwards they cannot be vnsayd againe. *Quapropter diu antequam sermo proferatur cogitandus est*, which is the first advice which we haue giuen.

Let vs then put one a resolution, to keep a strict watch ouer our toūg, saying with the royall Prophet *Dixi custodiam vias meas, vt non deliquam in lingua mea*, I haue sayd I will looke well vnto my wayes, that I may not offend in my tongue. S. *Ambrose* says vpon these words that there are some ways which we ought to follow, & others likewise which we are to shune; we are to follow the wayes of God, & to leave our own, least otherwise we come to stray, to be lost, and to fall into sinne; & he addes that we shall well eschew these dangerous wayes, if we can only be silent and hould our peace. We read in the Ecclesiasticall History of a certaine Monke called *Pambo* who being without learning & single himselfe, had recourse vnto another learned & prudent Monke, to be instructed by him in spi-

Psal. 38.

Amb. l. 1. off. c. 2.

Hist. Eccles. q. 2. l. 6. c. 1.

rituall

rituall things, of whome hauing heard this verse, *I will looke well vnto my wayes, that I may not offend in my tongue.* *Plumbo* would not let his Master proceed to teach him any more, but sayd, if I can but learne this lesson well, it will be sufficient for me, and some six monthes after being reprehended by his Master for not comming againe to take out an other lesson, he answered, Beleeue me Father, I haue not yet in any tolerable māner put the first in practise; and many yeares after being asked of one who was familiar with him, whether yet he had learnt his lesson well or no, he answered that it was nine & forty yeares since first he heard it, & yet he could scarcily do his duty in it, notwithstanding he through that humility of doubting of it did fulfill that which was required by it: for as *Palladius* recounteth of him, he comprehended and learned this lesson excellent well, and put it in such manner in execution, that before he spoke, or answered vnto any thing which was demanded of him, he was accustomed to eleuate his hart vnto Almighty God

aduising of it, and communicating it with him, answerable vnto that counsell which we haua giuen before. And he addes, that by reason of this he was so assisted and fauoured by Almighty God, that when he came to dye, he sayd, that he did not remember, that euer he had spoken that word which he had repened him of. *Surius* writs of a ceraine Virgin, who kept continuall silence from the feast of the Exaltation of the holy Crosse in September vntill Christmas; and that so rigorously, that in those three monthes she neuer vttered word, which was a thing so gratefull vnto God, as it is declared in her life, that it was reuealed vnto her, how that chiefly for this heroicall act of hers, in mortifying of her tongue, she had merited to be intirely deliuered from Purgatory, when she dyed.

S. Maria d'Oigni.

FINIS.

THE

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